

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

051406Z Aug 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000626

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/05/2025

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: DZURINDA CONCERNED ABOUT RUSKO, BUT NEEDS HIM

REF: BRATISLAVA 618

Classified By: CDA Scott N. Thayer for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) During Charge's August 4 farewell call on Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda, the Prime Minister shared some candid thoughts on Economy Minister Pavol Rusko (reftel). Dzurinda told Charge that he is increasingly concerned about Rusko. He said that he has traditionally dealt with Rusko in kind of a hands-off fashion, but that he is considering a more direct approach. Specifically regarding the concerns of the Central European Media Enterprise (CME, an American company that entered into a partnership with Rusko to create the TV station Markiza, and which is desperate to buy out Rusko's share), Dzurinda told Charge that he is aware of the issue. He said that CME had requested a meeting with him several years ago, but that he did not meet with them. However, he said, he is now willing to meet. The ultimate resolution of the issue remains hazy. As one CME representative told us, "Rusko doesn't back down; when he gets back into a corner he doubles his bets. It works for him, because the other guy usually blinks."

2. (C) Charge asked about the common perception that Rusko's hands may not be entirely clean. Dzurinda nodded his head, but it was unclear whether he agreed with the perception of impropriety, or if he knew of any specific dirty deals himself.

3. (C) Charge also asked Dzurinda about a comment made by a cabinet member suggesting that Rusko (who also leads the Alliance of New Citizens, ANO) may no longer be part of the coalition by October. Dzurinda responded that "I have to get the state budget passed." Comment: After that happens in December, we believe that all bets are off as all parties will begin competing for votes in the fall 2006 national elections. End Comment.

4. (C) Dzurinda briefly mentioned his meeting with Hankook reps after the cabinet rejected the Rusko-orchestrated investment incentive package for Korean tire maker, calling them "arrogant." He recounted that at one point in the meeting he finally said "I have been Prime Minister of this country for seven years, and you cannot talk to me like that."

THAYER

NNNN